



Environmental Crimes Case Bulletin

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics and Training

This bulletin summarizes publicized investigative activity and adjudicated cases conducted by OCEFT Criminal Investigation Division special agents, forensic specialists, and legal support staff. To subscribe to this monthly bulletin you may [sign up for email alerts](#) on our publications page. Unless otherwise noted, all photos are provided by EPA-CID.

September—October, 2022

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Former Pittsburgh Water Treatment Plant Supervisor Sentenced for Clean Water Act Violation

James Paprocki, age 52, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was sentenced on September 8, 2022 in federal court to one year of probation for conspiring to violate the Clean Water Act.

According to information presented to the court, Paprocki was a supervisor at the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority's Aspinwall Drinking Water Production Plant. At various times between 2010 and 2017, Paprocki and another plant supervisor, Glenn Lijewski, illegally discharged clarifier sludge, a byproduct that is produced when raw water is converted into potable water, into the Allegheny River. Under the terms of an environmental permit, the sludge had to be pumped to ALCOSAN's waste treatment plant. Lijewski and Paprocki also submitted reports containing false estimates about the amount sludge that was actually being sent to the waste treatment plant.

Prior to imposing sentence, Judge Stickman stated that while Paprocki's conduct was serious, it was the only time Paprocki had been in trouble with the law.

"This sentencing completes the federal criminal investigation of the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority and two of its former managers for knowingly violating discharge permit limits and for false statements," said Jennifer Lynch, Special Agent in Charge of EPA's Criminal Investigation Division. "The prosecution has brought about much needed structural, funding, and cultural change at the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority, especially concerning the Aspinwall plant."

The case was investigated by EPA's Criminal Investigation Division. Prosecution was handled by a DOJ litigation team.



North Georgia Businessman Sentenced to Prison for Dumping Over 100 Drums of Hazardous Waste

Amin Ali, age 56, of Dalton GA was sentenced on October 27, 2022 for disposing of hazardous waste without a permit after dumping hundreds of drums in a chicken house in North Georgia.

“This sentence serves as a reminder that if you choose to undermine environmental regulations by illegally dumping hazardous waste, you will be held accountable for your crimes,” said Special Agent in Charge Chuck Carfagno, of EPA CID Southeast Area Branch. “EPA and its state partners worked together to address the environmental problems and bring the defendant to justice.”

“This case demonstrates how local, state, and federal agencies work together to uphold and enforce laws designed to protect human health and the environment. The Georgia Environmental Protection Division appreciates and would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the women and men who collectively held the responsible party accountable for his actions and developed plans to remediate this release. Such blatant violations of our environmental laws pose serious risk to the surrounding community and to the natural resources of the State of Georgia and must be redressed,” said Sara Lips, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, Georgia DNR Environmental Protection Division.

Ali owned and controlled Goldstar Investment Group LLC, 7 Days Property Management Inc., and Rock Springs Farming LLC. Through these entities, he owned property in Dalton, Georgia (a warehouse formerly owned by a chemical company) and in Rock Springs, Georgia (a farming property containing several old chicken houses).

In August 2021, Ali possessed more than 100 drums and other containers of chemicals, including many containing hazardous waste, moved from the Goldstar property to the Rock Springs property. The drums were discarded in one of the old chicken houses, with some of the drums left in an open trench to be buried. Some of the contents of the drums spilled and leaked into the surrounding soil.

Subsequent testing of the drums and soil revealed the presence of benzene, lead, and chromium. In addition, the contents of the drums were reactive and ignitable.

After being alerted through a call to emergency services, the Catoosa County Sheriff, Catoosa County Code Enforcement, Catoosa County Fire, Georgia Environmental Protection Division Emergency Response, Georgia Environmental Protection Division Hazardous Waste Management Section, and EPA Emergency Response responded to the scene. Ultimately, the cost of the clean-up exceeded \$500,000.

Ali was sentenced to two months in prison to be followed by one year of supervised release and ordered to



Former Miami Resident Sentenced for Smuggling Illegal Refrigerant from China to U.S.

On October 5, 2022, Jorge Murrillo, age 69, formerly of Miami, FL, was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison for conspiring to violate the Clean Air Act (CAA) by importing over 300,000 kilograms of illegal hydrochlorofluorocarbon-22 (HCFC-22) worth more than \$1.5 million from China. HCFC-22 is a widely used refrigerant for residential heat pump and air-conditioning systems.

According to court records and a Factual Statement filed in court, Murrillo smuggled large quantities of HCFC-22 into the United States to sell on the black market. Murrillo and his co-defendant would negotiate with a Chinese manufacturer for the purchase of large quantities of HCFC-22 and then import them into South Florida ports. At no point did he or his companies or associates hold unexpended consumption allowances that would have allowed the legal importation of HCFC-22. Between June and August 2007 Murrillo conspired to, and otherwise smuggled, approximately 309,536 kilograms of HCFC with a market value of \$1.5 million into the U.S. Murrillo resided outside the United States from the time of his indictment in 2012 until his arrest in Miami in May 2022.

In addition to his prison term, U.S. District Judge Donald L. Graham sentenced Murrillo to one year of supervised release. Judge Graham also ordered him to pay \$5,794.84 in restitution to Homeland Security Investigations for costs associated with storing the illegal merchandise. Murrillo's co-defendant, Norberto Guada, was previously convicted in 2012 of illegally importing HCFC-22 and served a federal prison sentence.

The CAA regulates air pollutants, including ozone depleting substances such as HCFC-22. The CAA and its implementing regulations established a schedule to phase out the production and importation of ozone depleting substances, with a complete ban starting in 2030. To meet its obligations under an international treaty to reduce its consumption of ozone depleting substances, the United States issued baseline consumption allowances for the production and importation of HCFC-22 to individuals and companies. Those allowances were incrementally decreased culminating in a complete HCFC phaseout in 2030. To legally import HCFC-22 during all points in the phaseout, one must hold an unexpended consumption allowance.



Juan Antonio Gonzalez, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; Charles Carfagno, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Criminal Investigation Division, Southeast Area Branch; and Michael Buckley, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Miami Field Office, announced the sentence.

EPA's Criminal Investigation Division and Homeland Security Investigations-Miami investigated the case with assistance from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Case prosecution was handled by a DOJ litigation team.

Chief Executive Officer Sentenced to 36 Months in Prison for Submitting Hundreds of False Monitoring Reports

On September 12, 2022, DiAne Gordon, age 61, of Memphis, Tennessee, was sentenced to 36 months in prison followed by two years' supervised release in connection with her fabrication of discharge monitoring reports required under the Clean Water Act and the submission of those fraudulent documents to state regulators in Tennessee and Mississippi. The court further ordered Gordon to pay restitution in the amount of \$222,388. On the fraud count, Gordon was sentenced to 26 months in prison, and she received an additional 10 months' incarceration on the related probation revocation for having engaged in the criminal conduct while on supervision.

According to court documents and information in the public record, Gordon was the co-owner and chief executive officer of Environmental Compliance and Testing (ECT). ECT held itself out to the public as a full-service environmental consulting firm and offered, among other things, sampling and testing of stormwater, process water and wastewater.

Customers, typically concrete companies, hired ECT to take samples and analyze them in a manner consistent with Clean Water Act permit requirements. Gordon claimed to gather and send the samples to a full-service environmental testing laboratory. The alleged results were memorialized in lab reports and chain of custody forms submitted to two state agencies, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), to satisfy permit requirements. In reality, Gordon fabricated the test results and related reports. She even forged documents from a reputable testing laboratory in furtherance of her crime. Gordon then billed her clients for the sampling and analysis. Law enforcement and regulators quickly determined that Gordon created and submitted, or caused to be submitted, at least 405 false lab reports and chain of custody forms from her company in Memphis to state regulators since 2017.

"Today's sentence appropriately reflects the harm caused by Gordon's betrayal of her position of trust and her fraud upon her customers, the regulatory authorities, and the citizens of Tennessee and Mississippi," said Assistant Attorney Todd Kim of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

"The Clean Water Act ensures that water quality is maintained throughout the United States," said U.S. Attorney Joseph C. Murphy Jr. for the Western District of Tennessee. "Correct and accurate test results of discharges into rivers and stream and the honest reporting of those results to regulatory authorities are important parts of the Act's regulatory framework. Without accurate test results and reporting of those results, the Clean Water Act will not work as Congress intended. Because honest reporting of this data is so important to the functioning of the Act, our office will vigorously prosecute individuals who falsely report test results."

"Today's sentence should be a reminder to those who choose to undermine the public's confidence in our nation's water quality for their own financial gain will be vigorously prosecuted," said Special Agent in Charge Charles Carfagno of the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal Investigation Division's (EPA-CID) Southeast Area Branch. "We commend the assistance of our state partners with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation for their substantial assistance throughout this investigation."

The case was investigated by EPA's Criminal Investigation Division with assistance from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. Case prosecution was handled by a DOJ litigation team.

Mississippi Wastewater Hauler Pleads Guilty to Clean Water Act Violation

On October 18, 2022, William Roberts, age 44, of Pearl, Mississippi, pled guilty for his part in illegally discharging industrial waste into the Jackson sewer system.

As an employee of Partridge-Sibley Industrial Services, Inc., a wastewater hauling business based in Jackson, Mississippi, Roberts admitted to supervising the transportation and disposal of industrial waste from Gold Coast Commodities, Inc., of Brandon, Mississippi, to a site at a commercial entity in Jackson, which, as a result of his negligence, caused the waste to be trucked and hauled to a facility that was not a legal discharge point designated by the Jackson Wastewater Treatment System to receive the waste.

Sentencing is scheduled for December 14, 2022.

“The defendant’s negligent conduct contributed to the discharge of millions of gallons of untreated industrial waste into the Jackson water system,” said Special Agent in Charge Chuck Carfagno, of EPA-CID Southeast Area Branch. “EPA and its law enforcement partners will vigorously investigate and prosecute those who deliberately violate our nations environmental laws.”

The case was investigated by EPA’s Criminal Investigation Division, the FBI, the Brandon Police Department, and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, with co-operation from City of Brandon and City of Jackson municipal governments. The case is being prosecuted by DOJ.

